

Waves Know Shores by xoma_c

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Summary:

Billy told himself it would only be a one-time thing.

Until it happens again. And again. And again.

1. Billy

A quick fuck with countless people he didn't give two shits about was always a good way to distract himself from all the shit he gets at home. *From that asshole Neil.* The thought about that son of a bitch made his stomach burn. He liked picking fights and causing mayhem, but after one too many calls home from school, he learned to take that rage towards screwing with people a *different* way.

The way these chicks stared at him at this school, there must have some sort of dry spell going around. Judging from the fact that *Tommy Hall* had been one of the 'better' looking chums here, he knew he wouldn't have to lift a finger to *get some* around here.

He knew he was good-looking, even back in California he was always one to draw attention everywhere he went. In return, there was plenty of good-looking bitches to choose from there, he couldn't say the same thing about Hawkins High.

The worst part is that the girls *here* were just as clingy as the ones back in California, except they didn't even have the pretty faces to justify for it. He was a walking bad boy cliché, and as a result, every chick and their mother thought they could 'change his ways'. Open up that soft spot that they knew he apparently had. It pissed him the fuck off. He never slept with the same person twice, too much emotional baggage. He didn't want no bitch thinking he was about to *change* for them.

He fucked guys too — But that was back in California. He knew that nobody in this small-town would be open to that kind of shit so he strayed away. All the guys here looked like shit anyways.

Then Steve Harrington happened.

Admittedly , the guy had a boyish charm that beat out all the girls in this crummy town.

While he indulged in the thought of making a move, getting a take on the boy's reaction, seeing how far he could push him— in a place like

Hawkins, Indiana, it was way too risky.

But he didn't expect Steve would be the one to make the first move.

He was at some lame party Tommy H was throwing, he was taking a piss in the bathroom when someone busted open the door.

"Sorry I-..."

It was Steve, he looked so pathetic and miserable, it made Billy want to snort.

He expected him to shut the door and let Billy finish his business. But instead, he lingered on behind the door that was still crept open. Billy pulled the door back to find the boy gazing at him with those huge doe eyes.

Unexpectedly, Steve started walking towards him and crowded Billy back in to the Bathroom.

"Billy.."

Billy knew what he wanted. He leaned his hand past the other boy to shut the bathroom door and lock it.

"Listen Harrington, if this is what you want.. I can give that to you just this once".

"Ok"

So Billy fucks him.

He knew what was going on in Steve's head.

He saw his dejected face near the punch bowl with the Wheeler chick. He knew that they had probably gotten in to some fight. That Steve was just using him as some outlet to blow off his steam. He let himself think that he was using Steve just the same. He just needed a warm body to put his dick in, and Steve wasn't half bad.

Billy told himself it would only be a one-time thing.

Until it happens again. And again. And again.

During basketball practice, Steve would feign small talk with him, then eventually it will lead to him asking Billy to come over to his house.

It made Billy snicker thinking about how he had even managed to get in to King Steve's pants. His dick must really be in high demand in this godawful town.

No kisses, no anything, none of that bullshit. They would head straight up in to Steve's room, Billy would tug the too-tight jeans off of the boy and then have his way with him.

Billy fucks him hard .. with sharp and heavy thrusts until the other boy is sobbing in to his pillow, legs quivering, and out of breath. He knows Steve will probably be sore for a few days, but he'll secretly take delight in watching the boy slightly skitter through the school hallways tomorrow.

A few times he'll catch the other boy lifting his head up for a kiss while they're fucking. Billy would push him back down in to the mattress and ignore his pout as he pounds in to him even harder. Because doing shit like that was dangerous. Eventually, Steve stopped trying.

Billy knows he's the first guy Steve's been with by the way he took his cock the first time that night in the bathroom. He remembers how stiff the boy's body went when he pushed in his fingers and the distraught look across his face. He remembered when he went inside him that night, he had been tantalizingly slow, pumping in and out of Steve with controlled strokes. He'd never been that gentle with anybody before.

Now, Steve will tell him to go *harder* like Billy wasn't *already* fucking him senseless. So Billy grabs hold of his hips and reverses their positions, so that Steve is the one on top.. riding him. Then he'd grip the back of Steve's neck with one hand and the other grasping on the curve of his hip, plant his feet on the bed and start fucking Steve as brutal and fast as he could. That would shut him up for good. The only sound coming out of Steve would be the silent sharp gasps that

Billy thrusts out of him. Steve would widen those innocent whisky brown eyes at him in disbelief like he can't believe he's letting Billy do *this* to him.

That's probably the reason Billy keeps coming back, even though he promises every time would be the last..

He won't stop because Steve *lets him*. He's just as fucked up as Billy.

"I think you should give me your number" Steve mentions nonchalantly after they had finished one time. Billy was already rushing to throw on his boxers and jeans.

"Why."

The other boy hesitates for a bit before answering. "I dunno.. just makes it easier to call you over and stuff"

He knew he shouldn't have given it to him. But he does it anyways.

Steve would call the other boy over to let him know whenever he had the house to himself, which seemed to be every other day. Then Billy would show up in his Camero within the hour.

Those premeditated phone calls dragged in to longer talks. About school; how Mr. Harris' shitty attitude was exclusive towards Steve in History class. Petty Gossip; how Tommy Hall tried to hide a boner during the school assembly.

Sometimes they would talk from evening in to the dead of the night, apparently Steve had insomnia problems.

Billy would have to whisper and suppress his laughter when Steve was being dumb so his jackass father wouldn't wake up and beat him to a pulp.

Eventually, one night Billy found himself talking about how the sun in California could get criminally scorching, how he had the pacific ocean at his disposal, and how much he missed his mother— no not Susan, his *real* mom.

It caught him by surprise when he realized the kind of shit he was

actually talking about with Steve, it scared him. He ended the call abruptly and said he had shit to do.

The next time Steve calls, Billy ignores it.

2. Steve

Steve doesn't know why he screws up everything good in his life. He tried convincing himself that it was just the circumstances or the people he was put with. But after one too many times, he realized he was the common denominator.

God forbid he meets anyone else he gives a shit about, because it was just a matter of time before they left.

Recalling the past three years of high school made him feel empty.. meaningless parties, screwing around with Tommy and Carol. They were filled with the type of people that he thought he wanted to be — but it's too late.

Nancy had came in to his life and awakened something in him— like a breath of fresh air in the dull, lackluster life that he was once absorbed in. When he was *King Steve*, beloved by the masses, except for the ones who mattered.

He never knew how alone he really was until the one person who mattered had left.

“I told you to stop drinking”

“BULLSHIT”

He thought bringing Nancy to this party would get her mind in a better place. After all that had happened with Barbra, the upside down — he was still trying to pick up pieces of himself together.

“No, it's not bullshit Nancy..”

“No— you.”

“What?”

“*You're* BULLSHIT”

Steve felt his stomach drop.

“You’re pretending everything’s ok, like we didn’t.. kill barb, like it’s great.. like we’re in love and we’re partying, yeah let’s party.. this is bullshit”

“*Like* we’re in love?”

His heart felt like it was being ripped out, he wanted to run out of the house, slam the door, and leave Nancy to do whatever the fuck she wanted. But he had this nagging feeling that she shouldn’t be left alone— not like this. He grabbed Jonathon when he saw him amongst the dancing crowd at the party and ordered him to take her home. She probably didn’t think he was bullshit.

He was ready to get in his car and race home— but the thought of being alone in that empty house plagued him. An empty house that was once a luxury for him and his buddies to screw around in, was now a tormenting reminder of how lonely he was— and Barbra. He’s never gone out in to his pool since, and his windows were now permanently barricaded by curtains.

He cursed at himself for not drinking as much as Nancy did, maybe then he wouldn’t be drowning in these awful feelings. There were too many people around, he needed to go somewhere private. The last thing he needed was for his ex-friends to see him cry.

He quickly headed for the bathroom and threw the door open, recoiling when he realized somebody was already in there. It was Billy.

“Sorry I-“

He dreaded the thought of going back out there, he felt tears welling up in his eyes.

He hadn’t realized he was staring at the door blankly until Billy was standing in front of him with a confused look.

There was always an underlying tension between the two of them. When he wasn’t tormenting Steve, he would find the other boy staring at him from across the hallway, or between classes.. he didn’t

know why. But something in him told him that it was more than just intimidation.

He knew the other boy had a reputation for fucking anything with two legs. He wondered if—

No. He couldn't. He didn't want to think about it. He had these thoughts of Billy a while back, and convinced himself that it was wrong. That just because the guy was from Cali didn't mean he was in to that sort of shit.

Those suppressed thoughts gushed past the gates he had put up when he saw those blue eyes pierce through him. So he stepped closer even though he wanted to step back. His body had betrayed him, and all he wanted to do was reach out and touch.

Before he could back out and blame his bizarre behavior on the alcohol, Billy had shut the door behind him.

"Listen Harrington, if this is what you want.. I can give that to you just this once".

Just this once. So it was true. The guy was really down for screwing just about anyone. Steve nods his head and bites his lips.

"Ok."

He doesn't mind being Billy's lay of the night, he was shell-shocked that someone like *him* would want Steve like that.

He was still a little bit buzzed from the alcohol, but the foreignness of Billy's fingers up his asshole sobered him up completely. He had never been with a guy before, he had a brief idea of how guys did it. He just didn't know it would hurt this much.

He was glad Billy had found a bottle of lotion, the friction between his fingers and Steve's hole made him feel like that part of his body was burning with pain — and *desire*.

Then Billy intrudes him with something much bigger from behind and it felt like he was being ripped apart.

Steve moans.

It hurt so good. He's never felt so alive.

Billy zips up his pants and darts out the door when they're done. Steve feels the same emptiness he did just a while ago.

Even though the boy had told him it would only be a one-time deal, he couldn't let go of the exhilarating feeling of being engulfed by Billy's cock. He craved for that to happen again.

He would try to get the blonde's attention in the hallway, but he always seemed to be headed in the opposite direction every time he saw Steve come close.

It stung him a little, he felt like a used up girl who got humped and dumped by the school's jock.

Eventually, he realized basketball practice was the one place Billy couldn't avoid him. It had surprised him a little when he tried to strike up a conversation and Billy had spoken back to him engagingly.

Somehow, they end up at Steve's house. The first time they're there, Steve awkwardly asks Billy if he wants a drink or something. The boy ignores him and quickly gets down to business, asking Steve where his room was.

It's different when they're fucking on Steve's bed. The other boy becomes aggressive, almost animalistic, pushing Steve down on to the mattress with his ass faced up.

He loved the feeling of Billy pounding in to him, fucking all his feelings away. It numbed a part of Steve's emptiness, and he prayed that the other boy would never stop.

He's writhing in pleasure, buck naked underneath Billy, and he can't stop looking at Billy's lips. They're parted open and wet .. so out of the spur of the moment he would dive in towards his face...

Billy pushes him down towards the mattress and Steve hopes he doesn't realize what he was trying to do.

Sometimes Billy would be so rough with him that his eyes would water and he would have to stuff a pillow on his face to hide the pain. He didn't want Billy to have to slow down and hold himself back again like he did the first time he caught a tear running down Steve's face.

So he tells Billy to go *harder* because he doesn't know what he wants in life but he's sure he wants *this*. He wants Billy to know that he can handle anything he throws at him. Billy gives him what he asks for, as if he was accepting a challenge and fucks him so hard he has to skip school the next day because he couldn't walk.

One night, he realizes that he won't be seeing Billy for a while because of the holiday break coming up.

"I think you should give me your number"

Billy stares at him for a moment.

Steve hopes he hadn't went too out of line, he didn't want to scare the other boy away.

"Why."

A blanket of insecurity washed over him. He knew that Billy could disappear any second for good. He felt pathetic for sounding so needy, but he hadn't realized that the other boy had snuck up in to his life and subsequently in to his heart. These little fucking sessions meant more to him than they would ever to Billy.

"I dunno.. just makes it easier to call you over and stuff"

He braced himself for Billy to tell him to fuck off and walk away. But the other boy writes down his number on the notepad sitting on Steve's desk before leaving.

And just like he hoped, there was a shift in the air.

At first, Steve would call and tell him a time to come over, abrupt and to the point. The other boy would reply with an half-assed

answer, a *maybe* or an *I'll see if I'm busy*. He always ended up coming within the hour.

Then one time, Steve brought up the History essay they were suppose to write on The Vietnam War. He asked Billy who Agent Orange was. There was momentary silence met with a burst of laughter. After Billy explains to him that Agent Orange was a herbicide and not some secret agent, he felt like an idiot. But he would continue asking stupid questions if that meant getting to hear that genuine sound ring out of Billy's lips again.

"God Harrington, it's 3am on a school night.."

Billy whispered over the phone, they had been talking for a while.

Steve explained to him that he's been having trouble sleeping at night, and that he could go days with out sleeping but was reluctant to tell the other boy why when he asked.

"Well..now I know why you're failing history, you're too busy snoozing your ass off there instead".

Then one night, Billy had suddenly cut the phone on him.

He didn't remember exactly what he had said to throw the boy in to such a rotten mood, but he brushed it off thinking that Billy was just being *Billy*.

But then a week went by and every time he called, he was greeted by Max who told him Billy was out, or sleeping.

When he tried to talk to Billy during Basketball practice, he was met with a cold shoulder. Instead, Billy spent the whole time goofing off with Tommy H. Steve didn't know they were friends again.

Was he screwing him too?

Steve avoids showering after basketball practice and heads straight home. He couldn't help but sob in to his bed when he realized that Billy didn't want him anymore.

He had probably got sick of Steve and moved on to other people.

Because Steve wasn't worth anyone's time, and certainly not Billy Hargrove. He wished he didn't get so attached, he promised himself he wouldn't.

Because while he's missing the other boy like hell, Billy had already forgotten about him.

3. Billy

He hasn't spoken to Steve in a week.

He was getting tired of the boy calling him every other day, that when the calling finally stopped, Billy thought that it was finally over for good.

It was Thursday and he was running late to basketball practice. He had skipped the last two practices to smoke pot with the guys from workshop class. He didn't meet a lot of people he genuinely liked, but the ones from workshop were okay.

He apologized to the coach for being late, and Steve approached him shortly afterwards. The boy had made a casual comment about how the coach was being a hard-ass today. Billy ignored him.

He didn't mean to walk away so hastily, but watching those soft golden brown eyes, now empty and ringed with dark circles stirred something in Billy. *He still hasn't been sleeping properly.* He shook away that thought, Harrington wasn't his problem. He never was.

He ends up directing the ball to Tommy four times even when Steve had been open. Apparently, doing that seemed to give Tommy some sort of go-ahead to start bugging him again.

That was the last time Steve tried to talk to him that month. Bill doesn't care. He had already warned the boy that nothing would come of their little arrangement. He *told* him it was a one-time thing. The winter break was coming up and he was glad that he wouldn't have to see Harrington's pathetic sad eyes in the hallway any longer.

Carol was throwing a New Years Eve party, and initially he had decided not to go. Something told him that there would be nothing for him there.

He finally caved in when Tommy H was pestering him non-stop about it, insistent on him smoking a joint with him and his posse. The

thought of free alcohol also wasn't too bad.

The party was bigger than expected. There were people from the town next street over, faces he didn't recognize, and strangers giving him heart eyes. All he wanted to do was chug down the crappy beer he had in his hand. He had been talking to Jared from workshop the past ten minutes, it took him three attempts to escape from Tommy and his buffoon friends. He was having second-thoughts about coming here, his beer definitely wasn't cold enough, and he expected a nicer selection of drinks.

What he didn't expect was to see Steve at the party, in the corner of the kitchen with the Wheeler Chick again. This felt like some déjà vu shit.

"Billy, you there bud?"

"Huh, sorry can you repeat that?"

He tried his best to continue the conversation he had been so caught up in minutes ago before he spotted Steve. Nancy had one of her hands placed on his shoulder, she was smiling and gesturing him towards the dancing crowd.

Are they back together?

The way Steve had talked about her sounded like they had no chance of reconciliation—

But he *knew* chicks like Nancy. Even dated one back in California. She was the type of girl that his parents would go frenzy over. A respected, well-kept, goody two shoes who knew what they wanted in life, and would turn around and break your heart the second they decide you don't fit in. He always steered away from these chicks, because it could never end well. Well..wasn't he glad that Harrington was still caught up in that *shit*.

The next thing Billy does was something he didn't plan on for the

night.

But it's been two weeks since he's gotten laid, and he realized this was the perfect opportunity.

He chats up some blonde chick who had been ogling at him the entire night. After whispering some romantic shit in to her ears, she almost immediately took him by the hands and led him upstairs in to an empty room. Tommy made some dumb howling noise at them. He didn't relish at the thought that Steve had been blatantly staring their direction the whole time.

Sadie— Katie or whatever it was talked too much and smelled of cheap perfume and spray tan. Billy didn't even like blondes, the only reason he was interested was because he wanted something easy.

The way she was moaning obscenities sounded like it came straight out of some fictitious porno. God, it was awful enough to make his dick go limp all over again. He didn't remember feeling this picky about screwing. Normally, he didn't give two shits about who he got intimate with, as long as he could selfishly have his way towards climaxing.

But now, everything felt out of place.

He forgot the cramped rubbery feel of condoms, he had gotten so used to fucking with out one—with Steve.

One day, the boy had insisted that they do it with out one. He told him that the only girl he had ever slept with was Nancy Wheeler, and Billy was sure that chick was clean.

It had felt so good going in and out of the boy bare, he ended up coming inside him.

Now that Steve popped up in his mind, he couldn't stop the train of thoughts that came afterwards.

The way he whimpered at Billy *don't stop*. How desperately he would try to stifle his pained cries when Billy sped up the pace, and how he would tremble and sob loudly when his body was overwhelmed and ready to climax.

How he collapsed on Billy's body afterwards exhausted, panting softly.. and it would take Billy quite some time to convince himself not to stay.. to curl his fingers in to Steve's messy brown hair and wrap his arms around the other boy.

When he had finally gotten off with Blondie, he had rushed to put his jeans back on, quickly muttering about how he had a good time, but had to leave now. Hinting her that it had been fun but he wasn't interested in sticking around for any awkward exchanges.

She didn't take the hint and handed him a piece of paper with her digits on it.

He dropped it out his car window as he sped home.

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School had started again, and the first day back he spots Steve standing by his Camero after-school. His eyes fixated on Billy as he walked towards him.

"Can we talk?"

Billy's already opening his car door, ready to take off. The other boy grabs hold of his arm.

"What the fuck did I do?!" Steve gives him some agitated look with his puppy dog eyes.

"*What the fuck did you do...?*" Billy repeated slowly. "You didn't *do* anything."

"Okay, then tell me why are you acting like this?"

“Acting like *what* exactly?”

“... I thought we were friends.. all of a sudden.. you just shut me out.. like you hate me or something” he said folding his arms.

Billy snorts.

“Don’t flatter yourself Harrington, in order to hate you.. I would actually have to give a shit about ya.”

Steve opened his mouth to protest, but Billy didn’t give him a chance
—

“What *exactly* do you think you are to me? I mean—don’t get me wrong, you were a good fuck, *princess*..”

Steve closed his eyes and winced.

“But if I knew you were this pathetic, I would’ve found someone else to stick my dick in”.

Billy knew it was a low blow, but he hid his uneasiness with a smirk.

“So we done here or what Harrington? Cause I’ve got shit to do”.

Steve stops and looks up at him, those golden brown eyes, unbelievably innocent were now red rimmed and wet with tears. He shakes his head and scoffs with a fake laugh.

“Yeah, I’m pathetic as shit. I’m sorry I wasted your time.”

He glances at Billy once more before walking away.

4. Nancy

The first week ever since that *Bullshit* escapade at Tommy H's party with Steve had left her feeling complete utter guilt. She had hunted down Steve a few times after, but all the apologies were worthless after the first one.

"Do you love me, Nancy?"

The deep-rooted realization that plagued her suddenly made her speechless for a moment. She attempted to play it off by telling him how silly he was being, but it was too late. The unspoken truth had come out, and Steve wanted nothing to do with her.

Flash forward to a few weeks later, Steve's spitefulness had dissipated in to indifference towards her, and she hoped the bad blood between them would slowly disappear.

His companion meant a great deal to her as cliché as it sounded.

That day at school, she told Steve she would come over to help him out with the English assignment he had been struggling with.

"Sure, if you want" he had replied a little aloof. But that was a first step to reconciliation, she'll take it.

"I'll be there a little past 8, I'll bring my mom's home-made chicken Parmesan!"

When she got home from Jonathan's place around 7, Mike had told her that Steve called and said he had to cancel tonight.

She thought Steve was being silly, his assignment was due in two days.

The only reason he would be cancelling is if he thought this whole thing was going to be awkward with *her*. She wanted to show him otherwise.

Steve's home was a twenty minute walk away, and she didn't want to bother Jonathan for a ride.

After two ignored phone calls, she decided to head on over to his place to check up on him.

As she approached his driveway, she noticed a familiar Camero parked down the road, but she didn't make much of it that night.

She rang the doorbell and knocked a couple of times.

"Steve I know you're home, your car's parked out front! Open the door! Steve?"

She stood there idly with her arms crossed. The temperature was dropping colder in to the night. After a couple of more minutes, she was greeted by disheveled hair and a flushed face.

"Nancy! I thought I told Mike to tell you--"

"I know, I just wanted to make sure you were okay, you weren't picking up any of my calls."

Steve's eyes shifted "I was busy."

"Okay, well now that I'm here, we could get started on English?"

"Nance.. it's really alright, I'm actually almost finished"

"Oh, you sure Steve? Maybe I can help you check it over"

"I said it's alright!"

She was a little taken aback from the sudden raise in his voice.

"I mean- Sorry Nance.. I already had help from someone else. I appreciate you trying to do this for me, I really do."

"Okay, no problem, I'll just walk back home now".

She was met with the familiar concerned eyes she had gotten so used to a while back.

“Wait- you walked here?”

She ended up using Steve's phone to call Jonathan to come pick her up.

The next day at school, she noticed fresh red bruises on Steve's wrists when his sleeves slightly rolled down as he reached for his books in his locker.

“Steve- what the hell?” She reached out to grab hold of his wrists. He flinched away and shoved his sleeves back down.

He told her it was from basketball practice and promptly walked away.

She was afraid Steve might have been hurting himself, but bruises like *that* had to come from another person.

It wasn't until Jonathan had brought up the wild suggestion that it finally clicked in Nancy's head.

“Hey, are Steve and Hargrove friends or something now?”

“Billy? Not that I know of, why?”

“I saw them in the locker room after school. I left my Ramones shirt from gym class- anyways, I kind of walked in and saw them together.”

Nancy gave him a questioning stare.

“So?”

“They were kind of- like hunched over each other, Billy was saying something in to his ears.”

Jonathan mirrored the puzzled look on her face.

“I mean, they kind of scrambled off of each other when they noticed I

walked in. I got my Ramones shirt back” He smiled and held his shirt up to Nancy’s face.

It wasn’t the first time that Nancy suspected something was going on with Steve and Billy, but it was the moment she knew that this *something* was more abysmal than she had ever thought.

Steve was absent for the past two English classes, and she volunteered to bring him his homework after-school.

After about thirty knocks, she was thrown off by Steve’s unsightly appearance. His face had dried with tear streaks, and his eyes were darker than she had ever seen them. But the most disturbing thing was the bruises on his neck that she could see while he was in his low cut pyjama t-shirt. His milky pale neck was splotchy with large purple bruises with yellowish green. It must have been weeks old.

“Don’t tell me *those* are from Basketball practice Steve, those are finger print marks!”

“Nancy-“

“*Why?*”

The way her tone implied it was a confirmation to Steve that she *knew*.

It took a while for him to open up and tell Nancy what was going on, and she’s sure to this day he wasn’t telling her all the details.

What she put together was that Billy and Steve had been involved with each other, and judging from the looks of it, Steve had roughly been the one on the receiving end.

“Steve, you need to do something about this, you can’t just -“

“I *let* him Nance! Alright? I wanted it just as much... and I think I still would, if he stuck around“

She was at a loss of words.

"I'm fucked up, aren't I" Steve looked away, riddled with shame.

All she could do was console the broken boy in front of him and tell him everything was going to be alright. The barrier that was once between her and Steve broke that night, and she became his support system.

She didn't see him as the same boy who launched spitballs in the back of kids heads, or the boy that she fell in love with last year. He was the kind, pure-hearted, and brave boy with the bat who had gone back in to the house that night and saved her and Jonathan's life.

Right now, he thought he was worthless and broken. She wanted to do everything in her power to make sure he knew he wasn't.

Over the holiday break, she invited Steve over to her family dinners and get-togethers with Jonathan. Ironically, he ended up becoming closer with her boyfriend than he was with her. Jonathan would show him his collection of rock music and Steve would be awe-struck at all the good stuff he's been missing out on. He ended up getting Jon a new record player for his Christmas present.

Carol was throwing a massive party during New Years Eve. It was one of those parties where everyone around town would automatically show up to get plastered. Jonathan's friend, Freddie had asked him to go and naturally Nancy decided to tag along. She thought this would be a great opportunity for Steve to meet someone new, and move on out of the dark hole he's buried himself so far in.

It took her a while to convince him that he needed to get out.

"Steve, you can't just spend every waking minute at home or with me and Jon".

"Fine" he reluctantly agreed.

The swarm of people cooped up inside Carol's house and the loud music blasting through the speakers took everyone's mind off the chilly weather outside.

"C'mon Steve, stop sulking and get out there."

"I'm not sulking" he protested " I'm just enjoying some nice warm beer."

Nancy shook her head and laughed "You see that blonde girl in the pink jumper over there?"

He squinted his eyes and pursed his lips "What about her?"

"She's been casting some glances over here for quite some time, and I'm pretty sure *I'm* not the one she's interested in".

"Idunno Nance, could be that magnetic red dress you got on..."

"Oh shut up!" She pushes him towards the dance floor.

All of a sudden, Steve froze and she felt his shoulders go stiff. "Steve, c'mon you're doing this.."

Then before she could finish her sentence, she saw that *Billy Hargrove* was standing just a few feet away. He was talking to *Jared*, a senior she had recognized from school.

It was just the luck of the universe that Billy would be standing so close to them in a house crowded with over a hundred people. She felt a bit guilty for practically dragging Steve here in the first place.

As if Steve had read her mind, he shook himself out of that haze and told her it was alright and that he was happy to be here.

“Forget that, let’s go dance.. just me and you” she took his hands and led him deeper within the crowd.

“Are you sure Johnny won’t mind?” He teased.

Steve was being his cheery self, but she could tell his positive demeanor was just pretend. The moment Billy Hargrove had become a huge flirt with a random blonde girl at his side, she felt Steve drop his act and tense up. She almost took a breath of relief when Billy had finally disappeared off the main floor with blondie dragging him up the stairs like they were getting ready to do *god knows what*. Shortly after, Steve told her he was tired and was ready to head home.

“You sure Steve? It’s not even midnight yet.”

“Yeah.. Johnny’s gonna bring you home later, right?” he had a vacant look in his eyes that worried her.

Nancy wanted to tell him to stay, and that assholes like Billy weren’t worth hurting over. That the *thing* they had going on was unhealthy and she didn’t want to watch Steve suffer a minute longer over that bullshit. But she knew what his response would be, he always became defensive and shut down when it came to the *Billy* topic. So she gave him a peck on a cheek and wished him a Happy New Year.

“Drive safe!”

“I will, thanks Nance.”

5. Steve

Steve had skipped school on Thursday. On Friday he decided if he was already in the gutter, he might as well stay there.

He got up from his bed to head to the bathroom, the only reason for getting up these past few days. He glanced back at the huge dip in his mattress that seemed to be permanently engraved from where he had been lying down for so long.

His grades weren't great to begin with, and missing all these days of work and assignments wasn't going to help with that, it made him feel guilty as hell.

He wasn't smart like Nancy or Billy, he didn't have any quirky talents like Jonathan Byers, yet he didn't have the guts to ignore being a useless fuck and wasting away like Tommy and Carol.

There wasn't any light at the end of the tunnel for him, he'd be damn lucky if his dad ends up hiring him to work for his boring accounting firm.

He sat on the cold tile floor in the corner of his bathroom, eyes glanced over at a box of razor blades sitting by his sink.

A silly thought popped in his head.

The idea that he could just disappear —

Would anybody care? Like *really care*?

Maybe his parents would, but they could only mourn over their dead son for so long until they're headed on to the next 'business' trip. Salt Lake City perhaps? Nah, probably Williamsburg, they'd need something relaxing to 'grieve' over the son they barely made time to see all their life.

Tommy and Carol would probably be genuinely bummed out for a hot minute, after all, they'd been childhood friends. Then they'd talk about how they saw it coming the next minute to his old friends and family. He could almost hear Carol's phony voice saying how her and

Tommy were always there for him, how they just couldn't believe he would do this to himself.

Nancy would drive herself in to even deeper guilt. God, she loved to pity him. Maybe she might even make this about herself and think she was the reason behind it.

And that's it. Not even a handful of people who's lives would be affected. The world would continue spinning with or without Steve Harrington.

He tried not to think about how a certain blonde with blue eyes would take the news. He didn't want to think about how little this would probably affect Billy.

How would he end up hearing the news anyways?

Maybe at basketball practice, Tommy would probably be the one to break it to him.

"Did you hear? Harrington went crazy and killed himself."

The blonde boy would scoff. *"Did he now?"*

He'd think to himself *I fucked him a couple of times. What a shame.*

Then he'd continue back to the life that he had before Steve ever came in to his.

He hadn't realized that someone had been knocking at his front door the whole time until the banging became alarmingly loud. That jolted him out of his thoughts, and back in to reality. A sudden shame coiled in his stomach, he felt weird for having those thoughts.

His parents weren't coming home until next week, and he didn't know who else would be knocking up a storm at his door on a Friday

evening.

Maybe it was -- No it couldn't be..

He made out a five foot two figure standing behind his frosted glass doors. He sighed a breath of disappointment and felt foolish at his short-lived excitement that it could have been someone else. It was probably Nancy.

He hadn't realized how ridiculous he must've looked until he saw the appalled expression creep up on her face.

"Nancy-" He hadn't spoken in so long, his voice croaked.

She was staring at his neck. He instinctively wrapped his hands to cover up the bruises on his throat.

She gave him a disapproving look.

"Why?"

Crap. She *knew*.

The intimate nature of these marks, *Billy's* marks made him feel exposed- and more ashamed than he could imagine. He threw on a sweater before they sat down on his living room sofa.

He didn't know how to explain it to her, it felt like exposing a dirty secret that was only half of his to tell.

He was afraid of saying something that would drive Nancy in to thinking he wasn't the guy she thought he was. He could see the disgust on her face every time Billy's name was mentioned, so he avoided that word and kept everything short and brief.

God, if only she knew how patient Billy was when he walked him

through the boring chapters from History. How the boy had practically forced Steve to get his shit together and write a proper english essay rather than the bullshit he had conjured up in less than 30 minutes. If she knew about the hours Steve and Billy would spend on the phone talking just about everything and nothing, she wouldn't think of this whole thing as black and white as she did now.

Steve saw a side of the other boy that nobody else had seen. A side that he doubts even Billy himself will admit to. There were parts of *good* in Billy that reminded Steve of the way Nancy was when he fell for her last year.

“Steve, you need to do something about this, you can't just -“

He didn't want her to misunderstand the situation. Steve had been the one who initiated this whole thing. *He* had been the one to ask Billy to do this to him. *He* was the one who had a million chances to walk away but didn't. And now *he* was the one playing victim and painting Billy as the bad guy, when in reality the whole thing had been his own fault.

“I let him Nance! Alright? I wanted it just as much... and I think I still would..if he stuck around”

Nancy's expression turned from disgust in to pure utter shock. He wished he hadn't said the second part of that sentence.

"I'm fucked up, aren't I" he couldn't look her in the eyes anymore.

Carol was throwing one of her annual New Years Eve party and he hadn't realized that he had never missed one in his life. Just a year ago, Tommy and the gang had been his entire reason for being. Now, everything couldn't have been more different. He lamented at the thought of going back to where he was. As pathetic as his life was now, he'd rather choose to suffer than to be ignorant.

Nancy had convinced him that this would be good for him. And yeah, maybe it would be *good*. He'd been feeling so lousy as of lately that he forgot that even *Asshole Steve* knew how to have fun and enjoy life back then. Things like that were important. For the first time, he thought that he didn't have to feel like shit all the time. He didn't *deserve* to feel like shit all the time.

So he put on his fancy black shirt and went.

He should have stayed the fuck home.

There the blonde boy was, standing a few feet away, alive and in flesh.

He had gotten so used to seeing the other boy in memory, that seeing him in person took him to another place, and had caused a minor hysteria to rise in his chest.

He was wearing the same red shirt that night of the halloween party.. the first time he and Steve had *gotten together*. The irony didn't pass over his head that he was wearing the same black shirt as well.

They both caught each others gaze for a split second, and that was the only time Billy looked at him.

Nancy had dragged him on to the dance floor, he repeated the mantra in his head *have fun, have fun, have fun*.

But all he could think about was *Billy Billy Billy*. His body was robotically moving to the music, but his heart was aching somewhere else.

The moment he saw some blonde girl that Billy had been flirting with drag him upstairs, his throat closed up. He felt like he couldn't breathe.

That was enough confirmation that Billy had gone on with his life, and that Steve had meant nothing. He didn't care that Steve had been gone.

He probably had been on to the next piece of ass right after he had ditched Steve.

It finally dawned on him that Billy would screw that poor girl just as he had screwed him two months ago during the Halloween party.

He didn't want to be here anymore, but he didn't want Nancy to worry so he continued his bullshit act of being happy for just a bit longer.

'it's great.. like we're in love and we're partying, yeah let's party.. this is bullshit'

His thoughts traveled back to that night in autumn, when Nancy had called him out. Now, he wanted to tell her that he knew exactly how she felt.

"I think I'm going to head home."

He saw the flash of concern on her face.

He couldn't risk the chance of staying long enough to watch Billy come downstairs with a smug look on his face. Perhaps it would be the same look that he made after he had fucked Steve in the bathroom two months ago.

She gave him a peck on the cheek and wished him a Happy New Year. God bless her for sticking around through all his bullshit.

Steve made a promise to himself that the first day back to school would be a fresh start. He made sure he was caught up with all of his assignments the night before, got himself a nice big breakfast in the morning, and whistled on his way out the front door. He was done feeling like bullshit. He shivered at the freezing winds that struck him as he got in his car. The glorious warm sunshine that shone through his windows this morning had deceived him, perhaps as a testament to how he was feeling himself.

For once, History flew by like a breeze. He's walking out of class with Johnny to his locker, the boy said he had something to give him.

"What is this?"

"It's the new Van Halen album, thought you'd might like it ."

"Van Halen?"

"You know, that song you said you were diggin'... *Go ahead and jump! Get it in, Jump! Jump!*" Jonathan belted out. He could be such a dork sometimes. Steve chuckled.

"Ohh! Yea.. Yeah.. I remember, wow Jon, you didn't have to.."

"S'not a problem, you got me a goddamn record player, thought I should give you something back in return.. it's not much but.."

"Thanks man..." He gave him a friendly nudge on the shoulder.

Before Steve could take a better look at his new gift, he heard the locker slam in front of him and a hideous cackle.

“You queers finally decided to suck each other off?” Tommy had that disgusting sneer on his face, he looked back and Billy was not standing too far from behind. Steve tried to keep his composure.

“You and I both know who the biggest dick-sucker in school is, Tommy..” Steve retorted.

“I mean-is Wheeler alright with all this?” a sly grin grew on his lips. “Or wait.. are you guys sharing the bitch?”

Jonathan muttered quietly at Steve to just ignore him. But having been friends with the asshole for so long, he knew that the other boy would egg him on until he got a reaction out of him.

“Oh c’mon Steve, we both know that Nancy the slut wheeler would totally love getting doubled teamed on— I mean when do I get a turn?”. He heard Billy snicker in the back.

That made something in him boil over.

He grabbed Tommy by the collar and shoved him towards the lockers at the other side of the hallway. Tommy was still laughing wickedly. He felt Jonathan's hands lock around his shoulders pulling him back.

“Steve! It’s not worth it, C’mon! Steve let go!”

It took every fibre in him to back off and not pummel the living shit

out of the rat in front of him.

“Jheezus Byers, put a leash on your boyfriend will ya?” Tommy straightened out his shirt with that nasty grin still on his face.

Billy shook his head and scoffed. “Let’s go already, stop wasting your time with these faggots..”

Steve glared at Billy’s back as him and the weasel walked off.

The rest of the day went brutally slow. He felt something gnawing under his skin the entire time, even Nancy knew something was up in English class. He had told Jon not to mention what happened by the lockers to her.

“Said I’m fine Nancy, do you always have to ask so many goddamn questions?”

She stayed quiet the rest of the class.

He felt like total shit by the time the school bell dismissed him. He passed by Tommy H in the hallway, he was busy chatting away with Carol. He wondered if now was a good time to get back at the other guy, throw him outside and have a fair fight. But after playing out the scenario in his head, the thought just didn’t entice him as much as he wanted it to.

Because Tommy wasn't the real villain of the day, he pulled the same bullshit he always did. What else do you expect from a weasel? What really pissed Steve off was *someone else*.

It was one thing for Billy to ignore him, but to laugh along with that weasel and call him a faggot? That was uncalled for.

He found himself standing near the boy's Camero after-school. He didn't know what exactly he wanted from the other boy. An *apology*? He knew he wasn't going to get that. Or perhaps he couldn't stand the radio silence between them for the past month. He perked up when he spotted Billy walking towards him.

It was a little upsetting to see the other boy reach for his car door and act as if he didn't even see Steve standing there.

"Can we talk?"

The other boy huffed out a sigh as if this was a ridiculous waste of time.

"What the fuck did I do?" Steve's voice came out more desperate and strained than he had intended it to.

"What the fuck did *you* do...?" He wished Billy would stop talking to him like he was some stupid kid. "*You* didn't do anything."

“Okay, then tell me why are you acting like this?”

“Acting like *what* exactly?”

Of course, it was so typical of Billy to twist things to make *Steve* look like the dumbass.

“... I thought we were friends.. all of a sudden.. you just shut me out.. like you hate me or something”.

“Don’t flatter yourself Harrington, in order to hate you.. I would actually have to give a shit about ya.”

He was going to call his bluff. Not after all the shit they’ve been through, this guy couldn’t have been that callous.

“What *exactly* do you think you are to me? I mean—don’t get me wrong, you were a good fuck, princess..”

A good fuck. Steve flinched, sudden realization hitting him hard. That was essentially what he was to Billy summed up in three words.

“But if I knew you were this pathetic, I would’ve found someone else to stick my dick in”.

That hit him again like a consecutive sharp blow to the face. He hadn't realized his eyes were watering until he felt his cheeks get a little wet.

He shakes his head and tries to play it off. He didn't need Billy to see him cry. The guy made it clear how pathetic he thought Steve was, he didn't need to add on to that.

"So we done here or what Harrington? Cause I've got shit to do".

He looks up to see if there's *anything* in Billy's face. He doesn't know what he's looking for, but whatever it is, it wasn't there. Billy met him back with a stoic gaze, the guy *really* didn't give a shit.

Nancy had been right the first time she said it. He was *Bullshit*. And now Billy had confirmed it too.

"Yeah, I'm pathetic as shit. I'm sorry I wasted your time."

6. Steve

A week goes by and Steve is still struggling to make it through day by day.

A month goes by and his mind only wanders in to that dark place again when he finds himself alone.

Spring has finally arrived with the delightful chirping of birds and the gentle cool breeze. Winter was tough as hell, but like the seasons change, the people grow with them.

Steve starts to feel normal again. The thought of Billy Hargrove rarely crossed his mind nowadays, only exception were the brief moments of catching sight of him in the hallway and inevitably, basketball practice.

Though he'll admit, once in a while, he'll think back to moments when they were together and he'll find himself missing the other boy.

"Friends? Whatchu talking about, i ain't got no friends.."

"Oh C'mon.. King Steve? Bullshit, just hop back on your throne, I'm sure good ol' Tommy boy would be on his knees in a second"

"I'm sure that little shit would, hey Billy? .."

"Yeah?"

"You ever get that feeling, like you're surrounded by people but you still feel alone. And it makes you feel even shittier ..."

"Sometimes, I guess.. I get lonely too."

Perhaps Billy's friendship was what Steve ached for all along. He didn't miss the other boy's body any more than he missed these phone calls where they would hand over little pieces of themselves to the other person. Billy had thrown away Steve's pieces, when will Steve be ready to throw away his?

Steve had managed to stay out of trouble until mid-week of April, when Tommy decided to pull his bullshit again.

He's getting his books from his locker when the little weasel pushes him against the metal door.

“*WHERE IS IT HARRINGTON?!* ”

“The fuck are you on about, get your grubby hands off me!”

“Don’t play with me, you know what the fuck I’m talking about..”

Steve forces out a chuckle.

“Look asshole, I don’t have time for your dumb games-“

Tommy shifts his head suspiciously around the hallway.

“*MY DOPE.*”

“Your dope?”

“I had over 8 bills worth of pot stored in the bottom of my locker, and it’s gone.” He glares over at Steve accusingly.

“..And what makes you think I got anything to do with this?”

“You’re the only asshole here that knows my combo, besides Carol.”

“Well maybe try asking your girlfriend”

“Shut the fuck up Steve, we both know you took it. You couldn’t stand the fact that we shut you out our group.”

Steve rolls his eyes and lets out a sigh.

“Give it back!”

“I never fucking took it.”

“Look, just hand it over and I won’t even get mad. Hand it over or *I swear to god Steve*, there’s going to be trouble.”

“Listen Tommy, I don’t know what I have to say to get it through that bird brain of yours. I. Don’t. Have. It.”

He doesn't have time for this shit, so he pushes past the weasel and starts walking away.

“You know that shit belonged to *Joshua* right?” he hears the other boy call out as he walks down the hallways.

Joshua was a shady drug dealer that Tommy used to mess with. He remembers tagging along with Tommy once or twice when they did their little exchanges. He’d supply him with a shit ton of pot and Tommy would help him distribute the stuff and he’d let the weasel keep a little bit of the profit in return. He remembered telling Tommy the guy made him feel uneasy, and how he should stop fucking

around with that shit.

Well, *some people never change.*

Things have been going pretty good for the past month, he learned to distract himself from his shitty feelings by putting all of his focus in to his school work instead. That had done wonders for his grades. Even Mr. Harris had to go over his test with him after-school to see if he'd been cheating.

Nancy and Jonathan had become his ride or dies. He'd sit with them along with Jon's punkster friend Freddie at lunch. The first time he sat there, he ended up gaining a few looks of awe and disapproval, especially from Tommy's crew, but eventually people stopped giving a shit.

He'd look over to his table of ex-friends and expect to find Billy in his old seat in front of Carol, but the boy rarely ate lunch in the cafeteria. When he did, Steve would spot him sitting with Jared and a few other guys from his grade. It surprised Steve, those guys were the smart, over-achiever sort of kids who you'd know would end up in some Ivy League school. But really *knowing* Billy, it kinda made sense after-all.

Gaming season approached and coach said that the team better be on their best performance for the upcoming matches. Billy had taken the title of captain after one too many no-shows from Steve. He didn't even feel bad about it, Billy was undoubtedly the best player on the team anyways.

It was late after-school one day, when the entire locker room had cleared up. Steve spent a little extra time in the private showers because he wanted to avoid walking out with the rest of his teammates.

He was changing in the locker room, when all of a sudden he noticed Tommy creeping from behind him.

“Whaddya want?” he says flatly without turning around.

“Can I get a ride from you after-school?”

“And..why are you asking *me*?”

“C’mon Steve, I’d still like to think of us as old pals.”

“That’s funny. I don’t recall you saying that a week ago.”

“Shit- I’m sorry Steve. I just, I want things to go back to the way it was”

Steve rolls his eyes.

“Ok- maybe not the way it was. But I don’t want us to go on hating each other forever. Remember that time when I accidentally broke your new walkman, and you got so pissed you wouldn’t talk to me for a week?”.

“First of all- *Not accidental*. You broke it because I wouldn’t let you borrow the thing. Second of all- this shit happened ages ago, the fuck you bringing it up now?”

“I ended up getting you a newer, even better Walkman, and alright, what I’m saying is— let me make things up to you Steve. I know I can’t fix shit in the past, but I want to do better.”

“Listen Tom-

“Look Steve, you don’t have to if you don’t want to. I just thought

maybe we could hang out for a little bit, maybe grab a meal at Speedy's. Remember me, you, and carol? We'd always go there after school. It was like our secret spot. I miss that shit".

Steve blanks out for a second. He didn't think Tommy would ever be capable of *whatever this is* he was doing right now. For once, he felt like Tommy was genuinely making an effort to not be an asshole. Maybe they didn't have to be enemies after all.

"Fine. Meet me at my car."

"Atta boy!"

He smacks Steve on the back like a little weasel again. Steve wonders if he'll regret this.

"Where's Carol?"

Steve sat with his hands dangling on the steering wheel as Tommy plopped on to the passenger seat.

"Huh?"

"I just assumed she was coming as well."

"Nah, she's got some cheerleading practice meet".

They drove off in to the Diner's, and Steve felt a strange sense of nostalgia. He remembers driving down this road a thousand times

after-school with Tommy toggling his car radio with Carol in the back seat yapping away at all sorts of crap about the people they went to school with.

Steve parks his car and turns off the ignition. He looks over to see Tommy with a strange look on his face, like he didn't want to be at the place.

“You not hungry or something?”

“No! I just, I think I need a smoke or something”

“...Did I drive too fast or something? You look like you're gonna throw up”

“Huh? No.. just a little stressed from school work and shit”

“That's how I know you're lying.”

Tommy turns his head over a little too fast and stares at Steve.

“What?”

“You said *stressed* from *school work*? We both know you couldn't give two shits about that”.

The other boy chuckles “Oh c'mon Steve, people change. It's my senior year, of course I'm gonna get my shit together.”

They both get out of the car.

Steve heads towards the diner's front door.

"Hold up! Let's go have a smoke first." Tommy starts walking towards the backside of the diner. Steve stands there for a second, wondering what was causing the other boy to be so on edge. But he follows him anyways.

"Tommy, what's the matter-"

He freezes when he reaches the corner of the little alleyway behind the back of the diner. *Joshua*.

The older man yanks him by the shoulders and throws him against the dumpster before he could even attempt to run away. Steve groans in pain.

"Tommy, what what the hell is going on?"

"I told you there was going to be trouble if you didn't give the shit back."

"What the hell?! What- is this about the pot? I said I never took it!"

Joshua picks him up and shoves him towards the brick wall. The guy had the body of a professional wrestler, his weight alone was enough to crush Steve to bits. He didn't stand a chance against the other dude.

"Listen... *Steve* right? There don't need to be no trouble. I just need what belongs to me back in my hands, that's all". Joshua's voice was calm, but the menacing look on his face was threatening enough for Steve to know how serious this guy was.

“You know, I would totally give you back your stuff..” Steve put both his hands up, trying to declare his innocence . “I just.. I never took it in the first place!”

His entire body fell back as he felt a sharp blow to his stomach.

“Let’s start this again, where is it?”

Steve was still trying to catch his breath as he got back up on his feet. “Where’s what?” he huffed out.

Wrong answer.

The other guy swung at his face next. He felt another blow on his left cheek as his head jolted back.

The crazy macho drug lord had Steve held up by the collar now. He looked over to see Tommy the weasel shifting around nervously staring at the ground. The situation was so absurd it almost made Steve want to burst out laughing.

“You think this shit’s funny? I’m going to ask you one more time, *where’s my shit?*”

There's no way Steve was getting out of this one, so he tenses up his body to prepare for what's coming at him.

There was a brief pause before the other guy just let loose and started going at it. He’s been beat up before, by guys his age, even ones smaller than him, Hell, even *Jonathan* beat the crap out of him just last summer. Steve was never much of a fighter, he’d throw on the tough guy act during petty high school brawls, but he never had it in

him to beat the living crap out of another human being. Joshua certainly didn't have any trouble with that.

At first, he felt every hit. Two punches to the face, three to the stomach that caused him to land roughly on the floor, then there was kicking. Lots and lots of kicking. It made him gasp for air every time, he stopped tensing up his body before the next blow would come, and he stopped thinking all together. He must've been knocked a little too hard on the head, because he swears he hears Billy's voice right before blacking out.

Steve awakens with a monstrous headache and every inch of his body aching. His head felt like it was filled with straws and he's trying to figure out what was going on.

"Steve?"

He slowly opened his eyes, and blinked a few times. He was inside a moving vehicle. He tensed up immediately and felt a panic washing over him.

"It's alright. It's me, Steve. I got you, relax." He felt a familiar warm hand placed over his.

His brain still wasn't working properly, but he recognized that voice. It sounded like home. It felt like a warm blanket draping over him on a chilly winter night.

"Billy?"

"Yeah, try not to pass out. Think you might have a concussion."

If it weren't for the constant pain throbbing all over his body, he'd think he had died and gone to heaven.

He slowly shifted his head to the side to look at who was in the passenger seat. Holy shit, it *really* was Billy. He was right beside Steve, his brows were furrowed as his eyes concentrated on the road, and he looked a bit — worried.

“Why are you here?” Steve managed to mutter out.

The other boy went quiet for a bit.

“You got beat the shit out of.. by some creepy looking drug lord”.

“Yeah..” Steve nodded in agreement, he almost forgot his original question. “But.. why are *you* here?”

“I was around the area.”

Steve glances outside and spots The Hawkins General Hospital sign.

Billy parks his car outside and he's at the passenger side in no time, helping Steve get out.

The nurses take one look at Steve and brings him in to see a doctor right away. It had taken the doctor and his staff a good two hours to clean his wounds, run scans on his head to see if there was any traumatic brain injury, and secure the bandages around his head and body.

One of the nurses walked in and asked him if he had any other emergency contacts, because the ones she tried to get in touch with

weren't available. He told her it was alright, he'll call someone to come pick him up himself. She told him that he had to make sure someone else was here to sign him out, and that perhaps the boy waiting outside for him could do that.

The boy waiting outside?

After he exits the ER room, he spots Billy Hargrove slumped down on one of the chairs in the waiting area.

Now that he was sobered up from his attack, he felt even more perplexed by the other boys presence.

"They finally fixed you up huh, pretty boy?"

"What are you doing here?"

"I told you, I was around the area. Saw you getting pummelled the shit out of, so I brought you here."

"I don't believe you."

Billy scoffed.

"Oh yeah? Then what is it, huh?"

"There's no way you were just passing by that area. Rarely anybody from school knows about Speedy's, it's an isolated diner a few miles away"

“What’s your point, Harrington?”

Steve pauses for a bit, trying to recollect himself.

“You— and Tommy. You both planned this out didn’t you?”

Billy stares at him incredulously.

“You think I had something to do with *that* bullshit?”

“I don’t know what to think! You just happen to show up right when shits about to blow? Then bringing me to the hospital? Tell me... tell me that you weren’t there just to save Tommy’s ass.”

“Save *his* ass?”

“Yeah- if anything were to happen to me, he’d get in to serious deep shit for it, and you were trying to cover his ass.”

Billy let out an ugly laugh “You really think that low of me?”

“That’s the only fucking explanation I can think of. If you have anything better than that, let me know.”

“Ha! Well, maybe I *should* have left you there to die.”

Steve was livid, he couldn’t believe the nerve on this guy. He turned around and headed for the hospital exit.

“Wait- Steve!”

“Leave me the fuck alone!”

“Can you just listen for a second-”

He grabbed his wrists and yanked Steve back a little too harsh, it caused the injured boy to flinch a little.

Billy quickly eased his grip and softened his eyes.

“Steve.. *Please* ..”

He guides the other boy towards his Camero and opens the passenger door for him. Steve sits down reluctantly while avoiding eye contact the entire time.

“I heard him.”

The other boy sat down at the driver’s seat.

“He was bragging to one of his idiot friends about setting a trap for some thief that stole his pot.”

Steve turned around to look at the other boy. His head was rested on the steering wheel.

“At first, I didn’t really give a shit about it, but then I heard him talk to you after-school in the locker room.”

Steve hadn't known that Billy was still there, the locker room was practically empty but now it makes sense. The coach always asked the team captain to stay back to talk right before upcoming games. He probably had come in to the locker room a little late and heard the little commotion between him and Tommy.

"Anyways, I didn't know for sure... If this was really some kind of fucked up plan to get back at you or not, but I didn't wanna take any chances.."

He took his head off the wheel and looked right in to Steve's eyes. The brunette felt his heart race faster and faster.

"I couldn't follow you guys right away because you just left so quick, so I ended up asking someone for directions to Speedy's and I got there as soon as I could"

Steve let out his breath.

"Then I saw your car parked up front, I went inside the diner and noticed you guys weren't in there. That's when I knew something was up, then I found you— in the back"

He hears Billy swallow his throat.

"I'm sorry Steve, I should have drove faster or some shit."

"I- I just don't get it."

The other boy looked over at Steve just as confused.

"Billy, you don't- *you don't* give a shit about me."

“Steve-“

“No, you made it very clear a while back. So why the sudden change of heart, huh?”

Billy stays quiet, so Steve searches the other boy’s face for answers. When he’s met with the same stoic gaze that Billy had given him months ago at the school parking lot, Steve huffs out a laugh.

“Oh I get it— did you miss *fucking* me? Yeah, I’ll bet that’s it.”

“That’s not-“

Steve reaches his hands over on to Billy’s crotch.

“Is *this* what you were after?” Steve grinned wickedly.

“Steve, Stop.”

“Or would you prefer a blow job instead? I gotta tell you though, it might get a little sloppy because of the whole head injury thing.”

Steve starts unbuckling the other boy’s pants.

Billy grabs both of Steve’s wrists and gives him a warning look.

“What’s wrong? I thought you’d like this.. after all, I am a *GOOD FUCK*. Aren’t I?!” Steve yells out deliriously.

Billy continues holding on to Steve's wrists, and just keeps on staring at him like he's afraid he might break him any second. Well, jokes on him. Steve's already broken.

All of a sudden, the anguish and insanity of it all turned in to a pang of sadness that hit Steve so quick and sharp, he hunched over and leaned against Billy, face buried in to the blonde boy's neck.

He sobbed, and sobbed, and sobbed while Billy held him in his arms.

"It's okay.." he hears the other boy murmur "It's okay, I got you."

7. Billy

He remembers the time he saw Steve and Nancy at the New Years Eve party, he was 100% sure they had gotten back together. It stirred some unmerited spite in him and caused an old wound to re-open. He hadn't felt the need to screw away his feelings for a while now.

The first day of school, when he spots Steve getting friendly with Jonathan, he second-guesses what he had concluded that night.

"Faggots" he couldn't help but mutter when he saw Steve smile at Byers. It was the same goofy smile he gave Billy when he was helping him out with his homework. He instantly regretted making that comment when Tommy H misinterpreted it as a cue to start his bullshit with them.

There were times where he caught himself wishing that Steve would just come up to him and hit him, yell at him, get back at him for pulling that crap he did in the parking lot on the first day of school. But the other boy had decided not to play in to his games anymore, he would find Steve avoiding his gaze in the hallways, purposely walking in the opposite direction, pretending like Billy didn't exist.

But then came worse, Steve started acting normal again. Instead of looking away, now.. Steve would just look right through him. The same way he did when Billy had first moved to Hawkins.

It drove Billy mad enough that he starts to challenge the other boy and pick on him extra hard during basketball rounds.

Do something Harrington. Do anything.

The coach blows his whistle and yells at him. "Cut it out Hargrove, you and Harrington are on the same team!".

Then one time, he tries speaking to Steve in the change rooms after practice.

“Hey Harrington! Try not to kick ass so hard next time, I would actually like to be captain for a little bit longer”

The other boy smirks at him, almost genuinely until Tommy ruptures the moment with his god awful laugh.

Some time around April, Billy gets invited to a small get-together at Brad Coleman’s house, another buffoon from Tommy’s gang.

He’s smoking a joint in the backyard with Carol yapping about how crappy her relationship with her mom is. He nods his head and pretends to care, he needs to ask her where to get more of this good-ass weed afterwards.

“Good isn’t it? It’s from Tommy’s secret source” she winks at him.

Huh, he guesses the weasel was good for *something* after-all.

He feels so warm and fuzzy in the moment that he starts searching for Tommy to praise the guy so he could score a little bit more pot for later. He hears Tommy laughing from a distance and starts walking towards the source of his nasally voice.

“- I swear he won’t even see it coming”

“Bro, that’s genius. Think he’ll give Joshua back his stash?”

“Either that or he’s a deadman.”

“Well shit.. big man Josh doesn’t play no games. I almost feel bad for the him.”

“Yeah, well the fuckin thief deserves it.. ”

“Aha, true..Hope he doesn’t end up killing the guy!”

Billy raises his eyebrows, he decides not to get involved and walks away.

He hadn't realized just how close Steve had gotten with Nancy and Jonathan until he sees him sitting at their lunch table almost every day

He ignores the sound of Steve's infectious laughter coming from a distance in the cafeteria. He catches the boy laughing at something so hard, Billy fights the urge to tell him that he's going to choke on his food if he doesn't stop. He's not staring at how animated Steve's face would get when he was re-telling a story, how he moves his arms wildly around to emphasize what he was saying. His heart certainly does not swell up with pride when he hears Steve bragging about his well-deserved A on a history test in the hallways to Byers. *Suck on that Mr. Harris!*

Steve had moved on, he was happy again. It made Billy feel the slightest bit of guilt that he wishes to see the other boy feel the opposite. There was a part of him that selfishly wanted Steve to stay broken, so that he could fix him.

But another part of Billy was glad that Steve was no longer in his life. That when all is said and done, they were just two people that never stood a chance. It was only a matter of time before Billy would fuck up one way or another, and that Steve would be the one to leave. It was easier this way.

The basketball tournaments were coming up and Coach told him that he had potential, *major league* potential. His grades were exceptionally good, and his performance was always up to par. He told Billy that if he keeps it up, a Basketball Scholarship might be in the works. The only issue was working on his sudden bursts of aggression on the floor.

"I understand you've got passion, kid. But you need to learn how to control that passion, or you're going to screw yourself out of something amazing."

Billy nods his head, and heads back to the change room. He was tired as hell, he'd been studying for exams all night long and couldn't wait to get home and crash in to bed.

"I ended up getting you a newer, even better Walkman, and alright, what I'm saying is— let me make things up to you Steve. I know I can't fix shit in the past, but I want to do better."

He instantly recognized Tommy's nasally voice before he even got in to the change room. He went to his locker to grab his things before heading in to the shower.

"Look Steve, you don't have to if you don't want to. I just thought maybe we could hang out for a little bit, maybe grab a meal at Speedy's. Remember me, you, and carol? We'd always go there after school. It was like our secret spot. I miss that shit".

Billy scoffs. He didn't mean to eavesdrop but he lingers in the row of lockers behind just for a second longer to see if Steve would actually buy this shit.

"Fine. Meet me at my car."

He shakes his head at smiles at how innocent and forgiving Steve was. That was the other boy's biggest weakness. He wore his heart on his sleeve, and was trusting, almost to a fault. Steve Harrington was too damn soft for everything cruel in the world, especially weasels like Tommy.

He grabs his body wash and takes a few steps towards the shower when all of a sudden Billy freezes—

Tommy had been talking shit about Harrington to Brad just this morning. Something about the way his hair looked. There's no way that he had a sudden change in heart that quick.

Why the sudden need for reconciliation?

The sudden recollection made his blood run cold—

“- I swear he won’t even see it coming”

“Think he’ll give Joshua back his stash?” “Big man Josh doesn’t play no games. I almost feel bad for the him.””

“Either that or he’s a deadman.” “Hope he doesn’t end up killing the guy!”

Billy recoiled at the thought. There’s no way Steve was the one who stole Tommy’s stash of weed. The guy didn’t even enjoy smoking. Tommy was probably just trying to win back King Steve’s friendship. Steve was right, that weasel was the biggest cock-sucker in Hawkins High.

He didn’t know why that nagging feeling didn’t go away, even after he had tried to convince himself that he was just over-thinking things.

“Hope he doesn’t end up killing the guy!”

He’s witnessed a fair share of drug deals gone wrong back in California. He didn’t know just how serious the same type of shit was here in Hawkins.

“Hope he doesn’t end up killing the guy!”

He turns the shower faucet off before even heading in, and throws on his change-of-clothes. He’ll follow them just to be on the safe side, all he needs to do is recall where they were headed. Crap. He couldn’t remember the name. He know’s its a diner that they used to go to after-school all the time. Something that started with an S-. *Stevie’s?*

He stops and laughs at how ridiculous he’s being. There was no need to make a fool of himself.

*“Hope he doesn’t end up
killing the guy!”*

On a second thought, he’ll look for Carol and ask her. He heard the

weasel mention her name in his spiel. It took him a hot minute to find this girl, she was sitting by the bleachers with a bunch of other chicks.

“Carol!”

“Oh hey Billy, are you here to watch us practice our cheerleading?”

“You ever heard of this Diner called *Stevie’s*?”

She shakes her head.

“What? You tryna ask us on a date?” the other girls giggle.

“No— I need to know how to get there. Can you just tell me?! ”

His serious tone seemed to startle her a bit.

“Um.. Sure Billy. But there’s no diner in Hawkin’s called *Stevie’s*. At least not that I heard of”.

“Maybe he mean’s *Speedy’s*?” Some red-headed chick suggests, and he almost jumps out to hug her.

“Yes! *Speedy’s*. Where is that?”

Carol pauses for a bit, and stares at him with a hint of wariness.

“Why do you want to go to *Speedy’s*?”

“You know *why*.”

“Did Tommy say something to you?”

He felt his guts twist up. That was enough confirmation for Billy to know what was about to go down. He grabs the red-head by the wrist and pulls her away from the group. After she draws out a little map for him with marker on his palm, he sighs in relief and thanks her.

He’s never driven so fast in his life before. It was a long drive but he was thankful that there were only two major turns he needed to remember to make.

The entire ride there, his mind is jumping from one possibility to the next. How he'd probably burst in the diner and find Steve and the weasel chomp down a burger and fries. Or how his buddy Darren got shot that one time back in Cali because he messed with the wrong dealer.

Fuck. He felt like throwing up.

By the time he's turning in the parking lot, he's praying that he won't find Steve dead on the ground. He made promises to a million gods that he'll never let the other boy further than arms-length away from him, if they just let him be okay. *Please let him be okay.*

It was a quiet diner, there were only a couple of cars in the parking lot so he spots Steve's beamer right away. He sighs in relief that he's ended up in the right place. He's pacing towards the entrance door, a little too fast from the anxiety, then his pace falters a little from the dread of seeing what's to come.

He opens the door and finds a senior couple sitting on the booth on one side, and a lone man sitting on the other. The rest was empty.

He races out the door and finds his way around back. At first he spots Tommy fucking Hall standing on the side of the small alleyway staring at something out of Billy's view behind the dumpster. Then he starts walking slowly but surely towards them and closes his eyes for a second to prepare himself for what he's about to see.

"Billy! What are you-"

He takes one look and his stomach drops.

"Hall, Who the fuck is this?"

"Woah chill Joshua, he's just a friend of mine".

“Does he know where my shit is?”

“No.. but”

“Then why the fuck he standing here for”.

“I don’t know, I, Billy wh— ”

He lunged at Tommy and proceeded to knock the boy down to the ground. Then he threw punches at the weasel’s face, hard enough that it bruised his knuckles.

“BIL— BILLY! WHAT THE FUCK—“

Steve—

He got up and turned around. The fucking drug lord was gone. Tommy scampered off subsequently.

“Steve?! *STEVE?!?*”

He shook the other boy in his arms. His entire face was bruised and bloodied. There was blood coming from his forehead and Billy does a silent prayer that he wasn’t hit on the wrong spot in his head. He didn’t even want to know how the boy’s body looked underneath his shirt judging from the fetal position he was lying in. He gently scooped up the boy in his arms and got him in to his car as quick as

he could.

He's been beaten up far too many times to fully know how serious the extent of Steve's injuries were. His dad had knocked him too hard on the head on one occasion and he ended up in a short coma at the hospital. That was the last time the man fucked with his head. Steve's beautiful, beautiful brain better be okay or there would be hell to pay.

He's speeding down the road, and he wishes he knew a faster way to get to the hospital. He cursed at the fact that he had to head all the way back to a point in the town that he was familiar with. Somewhere down the road, he notices the other boy stir awake in his seat.

"Steve?"

He senses the panic in the injured boy as he shifts in his seat abruptly.

"It's alright. It's me, Steve. I got you, relax." He places a hand on top of his to calm him down.

"Billy?"

God, it's been so long since he's got to touch the other boy and hear his name come out of his lips.

"Yeah, try not to pass out. Think you might have a concussion."

The other boy stays quiet for a while and Billy hope he hasn't passed out again.

"Why are you here?" Steve says softly.

Because I was afraid you were fucking dead.

"You got beat the shit out of.. by some creepy looking drug lord".

"Yeah.." "But.. why are *you* here?"

Even half-beaten, Steve had the energy to be a persistent little shit. It almost made Billy laugh.

"I was around the area."

They finally reach Hawkins General and Billy feels like it's been the longest ride of his life.

He's glad Steve's awake and coherent at least, and wastes no time in helping the boy out of the car and guiding him towards the hospital.

Steve seems to be dozing off again, his feet faltering a bit, so Billy

yells a little too loud at one of the nurses to get a doctor quick. The nurse gives him a disapproving look but pages for a doctor immediately.

They place Steve on a gurney and wheel him off to a private room. He's still standing there shellshocked until one of the nurses tell him to wait in the seating area by the hallway.

"He's going to be okay *right?*"

She gives him a half-smile and nods her head slightly. He rolls his eyes, as if *she* knows jack shit. She's just a damn nurse.

Billy's sitting in the waiting area. For the first hour he's brooding in his seat thinking about how stupid he was. It's his fault Steve ended up like this. If he had just stopped him from taking the bait, or if he had followed him out the change rooms faster and hadn't wasted any goddamn time.

If he had gotten there a minute later, things could have gotten way worse.

Or if he never gotten there, Steve would have been left to die.

Billy can't remember the last time he cried for anybody else, but right now he's fighting away tears. He wanted to *kill* Tommy Hall.

The second hour approaches and he hears from the nurses that Steve's scans have shown up clear.

"No signs of any serious injuries, he'll be patched up and ready to go in just a bit" she smiles and pats him on the shoulder as if she knows how fucked up he's been feeling the entire time.

He spots Steve and starts walking down the hallways.

He feels like he's been holding his breath the entire time, and just now he lets himself breathe again.

"They finally fixed you up huh, pretty boy?"

"What are you doing here?"

"I told you, I was around the area. Saw you getting pummelled the shit out of, so I brought you here."

"I don't believe you."

God, Steve really was a *handful*.

"Oh yeah? Then what is it, huh?"

The other boy stares at him with suspicious eyes.

"There's no way you were just passing by that area. Rarely anybody from school knows about Speedy's, it's an isolated diner a few miles away"

Billy almost gets a sense of what he's trying to insinuate here and he's

trying hard not to get offended as hell.

“What’s your point, Harrington?”

“You— and Tommy. You both planned this out didn’t you?”

“You think I had something to do with that bullshit?!”

“I don’t know what to think! You just happen to show up right when shits about to blow? Then bringing me to the hospital? Tell me... tell me that you weren’t there just to save Tommy’s ass.”

He couldn't believe what he was hearing.

“Save *his* ass?”

“Yeah- if anything were to happen to me, he’d get in to serious deep shit for it, and you were trying to cover his ass.”

The boy had literally just put him through hell the past couple of hours and now he’s spewing out this bullshit at him. It made him want to laugh and throw something at the same time.

“You really think that low of me?”

“That’s the only fucking explanation I can think of. If you have anything better than that, let me know.”

“Ha! Well, maybe I should have left you there to die.”

It’s one of those moments where he stuck his foot in his mouth, but before he can apologize, Steve’s already angrily pacing out the Hospital exit.

“Wait- Steve!”

“Leave me the fuck alone!”

“Can you just listen for a second-”

He grabs the other boys wrist and watches his face wince in pain. He quickly regrets it and softens his grip. He didn’t want to hurt Steve any more than he already was hurt.

“Steve.. Please ..”

Don’t do this. I need you to trust me.

He brings Steve to his car and feels relieved that the boy hadn’t run off to call someone else to come pick him up. He needs to tell him

what happened, he wants Steve to know he cares. He just needs to find a way to bring himself to admit it.

He puts his head on the steering wheel and sighs in surrender.

“I heard him...He was bragging to one of his idiot friends about setting a trap for some thief that stole his pot.”

He notices Steve turn around, but he's still not ready to look him in the face.

“At first, I didn't really give a shit about it, but then I heard him talk to you after-school in the locker room...Anyways, I didn't know for sure... If this was really some kind of fucked up plan to get back at you or not, but I didn't wanna take any chances..”

He hears Steve's breath hitch so he takes this moment to look up and stare in to the boys eyes.

“I couldn't follow you guys right away because you just left so quick, so I ended up asking someone for directions to Speedy's and I got there as soon as I could”

....

“Then I saw your car parked up front, I went inside the diner and noticed you guys weren't in there. That's when I knew something was up, then I found you— in the back”

He almost chokes at the thought of seeing Steve's lifeless body curled up by the dumpster just hours ago. It was all his fault. He curses at himself again. He should have gotten there earlier.

"I'm sorry Steve, I should have drove faster or some shit."

Steve looks up at him, and his expression switches from awe to confusion.

"I- I just don't get it."

What don't you get? He wants to ask the other boy.

"Billy, you don't- *you don't* give a shit about me."

"Steve-"

"No, you made it very clear a while back. So why the sudden change of heart, huh?"

He hears the hurt in Steve's voice and automatically feels like shit. He doesn't know how all of this came to be, doesn't like the fact that if anything happened to this boy in front of him, he would never forgive himself. He finally realizes the guilt eating away at him wasn't from failing to get to Steve on time. It was taking away the time they could have had together. The months that he spent shutting Steve out and causing all sorts of damage to the boy. The possibility

that he might've lost the chance to ever see him again all because he was a coward. The fact that if none of this happened today, Billy would have just gone on doing what he does best- running away.

Steve's sudden chuckle brought him out of his thoughts.

"Oh I get it— did you miss *fucking* me? Yeah, I'll bet that's it."

"That's not—"

He feels the boy's hand on his crotch the next second.

"Is *this* what you were after?"

"Steve, Stop."

"Or would you prefer a blow job instead? I gotta tell you though, it might get a little sloppy because of the whole head injury thing."

Steve starts unbuckling the other boy's pants.

He suddenly feels a wash of regret come over him, he needs the old Steve back. He's grabbing on to the boy's wrists and he's afraid that he's ruined the boy for good.

"What's wrong? I thought you'd like this.. after all, I am a GOOD FUCK. Aren't I?!"

He's pleads Steve with his eyes, *come back. I'm sorry. Don't do this. Please. Steve. Please.*

As if Steve could hear his desperate thoughts, he surrenders over to Billy, face buried in to his neck. He feels the boy's tears dripping down his shirt as Steve trembles and sobs.

"It's okay.." He wraps Steve around his arms, silently promising him that he's here and he's not going anywhere. "It's okay, I got you."

8. Billy

Billy recalls taking Steve home that night, the boy had instantly dozed off as soon as he got in to bed, and Billy sat on his bedside and left just before the sun came up.

He left the painkillers the nurse had given him on Steve's bedside table and hoped the boy would heal up well over the weekend.

On Monday morning, when the sunlight peeked through his room window, all Billy could think about was *Tommy fucking Hall* and how much hell he was going to get. He hadn't been successful though, the weasel surrounded himself non-stop with his usual buffoon friends. It was a smart move on his part, because Billy was sure he already got a taste of what was coming if Billy ever caught him alone.

On Wednesday, Steve showed up to school with a bandage still wrapped around his head. His unusual appearance stirred a bit of commotion amongst the other students, with rumours circulating that the boy was involved with some street gang fight. Billy scoffed, as if there were any *real* gangs in this small-ass town. Tommy had stayed silent about the whole thing, and continued avoiding Billy for the duration of the week.

Thursday came, and Steve didn't show up to Basketball practice. It wasn't until practice was over that Steve approaches him by his lockers as he was getting ready to go home.

"Hey." The boy was fidgeting with the drawstring of his hoodie.

“Hey yourself.”

“I just wanted to say thanks for-“

“S'all good.”

Steve looks up, nods his head quickly and starts turning away. Billy grabs his shoulders from behind.

“Wait- How are you?”

"Good." Steve nods his head.

"How are you, *really*?"

It takes a while before the boy finally answers.

“As good as I can be..” he’s pursing his lips and all Billy wants to do is reach out and touch the slight garish bruise on his left cheek. “Fucking Tommy Hall..” Steve shakes his head and laughs.

Just hearing the weasel’s name made Billy wince in anger.

“He actually tried apologizing to me two days ago”

“Yeah..?”

“I told him to go shove it up his ass”.

“Good. Piece of shit deserves a lot more.”

Steve's smiling at him with gratitude or something like that and Billy feels like he doesn't deserve it. He doesn't deserve Steve's *thank you*, barely even deserved him talking to Billy right now.

“Billy..”

“Yeah?”

The boy pauses and purses his lips together before he can get the words out.

“Never mind, I guess I’ll see you around.”

Then he’s gone.

A week later, he's having his smoke break outside of school during lunch when Nancy Wheeler starts walking towards him.

"I want to talk to you."

He raises his eyebrows, and gives her a questioning stare.

"About Steve."

"Okay.."

"Listen, I don't know exactly what's going on between you two, but--"

"Well, then I don't see how it's any of your business". He purposely blows a stream of smoke towards her prissy face.

She frowns and starts dramatically wafting her hands "I'm not trying to start anything here, but Steve is my friend and I have every right to protect him from .." she pauses and shifts her eyes around.

"From what?" Billy's getting real worked up so he takes a step closer to intimidate her, and she instantly straightens up her posture and throws on that confident little demeanour she had when she first approached him.

“From *you*.”

“From *me*?” Billy chuckles amusedly “Funny, I’m not doing anything to him.”

“Yeah- you are.”

He kisses his teeth in annoyance, the chick really had some nerve on her.

“Oh yeah? Enlighten me..”

“Billy.. you are a piece of shit, and if it were up to me, I would have you stay away from Steve as far as possible.”

He throws his cigarette bud on the floor and starts crushing it with his shoe.

“But it’s not up to me, and I don’t know whether to believe Steve or not on this, but if you *really* are the way he speaks about you, then just— I don’t know.. maybe just talk to him”.

Billy huffs out a sigh, he doesn’t know what surprises him more, Wheeler’s daring little spaz, or the fact that Steve talks to her about *him*.

“Why are you telling me this?”

“Because you should know, how much you fricken mean to him.”

Adorable, she doesn't even know how to swear properly. He rolls his eyes at her.

“If he means something to you too, then talk to him. If he doesn't, then let's just pretend this never happened, alright?!”

A minute longer and he thinks her crazy bug eyes are going to pop right out at him.

He gives her a slight nod in defeat before she starts walking away.

Talk to him? He felt kinks in his stomach. What exactly had Steve been saying to her?

I'm coming, I'm coming! .. Steve mutters out loud as he dashes towards his phone.

“Hello!”

“Steve?”

He freezes, he hasn't heard that voice in so long, he has to blink a few times to make sure he's not hearing things. “Yes..”

“It's Billy.”

“Hi.. what's up?” he tries to sound as casual as possible.

“Are you free right now?” Steve pretends to check his imaginary watch for a brief moment before realizing he was on the phone.

“Um, yeah I guess.”

“Ok..”

“Why?”

“Can I come see you?”

“Like..here? At my house?”

“Yes?”

“Sure.. any specific reason?”

The other boy pauses at the other end and Steve smacks himself in the forehead for asking too many questions.

“I just wanna talk to you I guess.”

“Ok! I’ll be.. here.”

“Alright, see you in a few.”

Steve’s heart is racing and he leaves the receiver on his ear for a minute longer after the line cuts.

9. Steve

The doorbell rings.

Steve gets up and realizes he's been sitting on the ottoman next to the phone for over half an hour. He's pacing towards the door slowly, exhilarated at the idea of Billy Hargrove standing out at his steps out front. By the time the doorbell rings again, Steve's throat goes dry, unable to gather what his next words would be to the boy in front of him.

"Hi."

Billy's looking at him with those ocean eyes and Steve feels lost again.

"Hey" he manages to muster back.

Billy's giving him the same contemplating look that he does after the many nights they spent together, when Steve would absent-mindedly ask him to stay.

Stay.

"You not busy or anything are you-"

"No". Steve replies, a little fast. "Come in," he gestures Billy over to his corridor and watches as the other boy walks in.

They sit down on the sofa, the same one that he had his talk with Nancy months before. Also the same one that Billy had fucked him on in what seems to be forever ago. Steve bites his lips nervously and Billy's eyes are fixated at the floorboards in Steve's living room, like they were the most interesting goddamn floorboards he's ever seen in his life.

He makes a popping sound with his mouth before he starts talking.

"Wheeler talked to me the other day."

Steve looks up, a bit frazzled. "Nancy?"

"Yeah."

"Why?"

"Said something bout' me being a piece of shit and all."

Steve was genuinely surprised, what was Nancy doing trying to start something with Billy. "She's--"

"Not wrong" Billy does a half-smile with apologetic eyes. "Said something about protecting you from assholes like me".

Steve scoffs, “I don’t need *protection*.”

All of a sudden, Steve realizes that Billy had probably only come to apologize because Nancy had told him to. The room started to spin, and he was hit in the gut by the same twinge of abandonment he had felt months ago. Billy was going to leave him again after some half-assed apology. He couldn't stand to hear anymore of this.

“Look- You’re forgiven. Is that all?” He grimaces, he can’t help the wave of disappointment that sweeps over him.

“Steve, I-“ he watches as a thousand emotions wash through Billy’s face. *Guilt? Pity? Indifference?* Steve couldn’t make out exactly what it was but it was enough for Steve to get the hint.

“You what? You’re *sorry*? Or you’re sorry that you don’t want me.” He couldn’t even look at Billy anymore so he’s shifts his head away focusing on the crystal vase in the corner of the room. “Don’t have to apologize for not wanting somebody.”

“What you sayin?” he sounded oddly offended at Steve’s words.

“Y’know it’s not like I’ve been making it so hard for you either, I stayed away Billy. You weren’t interested and I got the memo and STAYED the fuck AWAY from you. So do me a favour, stop patronizing me and let me move on already.”

He feels tears prickling his eyes.

“I didn’t ask you to come apologize to me. I didn’t ask you to play hero, and I don’t know what the hell Nancy said to you, but I had nothing to do with it. I didn’t-” Steve’s voice cracks, *“I didn’t ask you to stay when you didn’t want me.”*

“Hey, Steve c’mon, look at me..” Billy’s croons. He grabs Steve’s face in his hands and shifts him towards his face.

“God, you don’t even know the half of it.. dammit Steve.”

Steve’s stutters his breath while Billy’s wiping away the tears on his face

"Of course I want you, I never stopped wanting you."

“Then why do you keep walking away?”

“*Fuck-* I don’t know” Billy’s shaking his head, his voice sounding breathless “I was scared. I’m a fucking idiot.”

“You can’t keep doing this..” Steve’s collapses in to the other boy’s

body and whimpers on his neck. "I don't think I can take it anymore.. you leaving again"

Billy shifts Steve up on to his lap and starts to cradle him, soothing circles with his thumb on his back. "I won't."

"Stay."

"Ok."

10. Billy

He didn't know exactly how he ended up in Steve's room again, sitting side by side with the other boy leaning on his headboard. They were barely touching.

It was silent, but for the first time he felt like there was no tension between them. Not the burning intoxication he felt when they would fuck each other senseless. Not the cut-throat competitiveness between who can make the other one break first.

Because that's what he's been playing with Steve this whole time. What a waste of time that was, because now he realizes that the boy beside him had stopped playing a long time ago, while Billy kept on doing what he knew best- breaking the people he loved.

He did it to his Mom before she passed away from cancer. He avoided visiting her in the hospital. Ignored her phone calls. He would imagine scenarios in his head of telling her to screw off. That he didn't need her to tell him how sorry she was, he didn't need her at all. Because she was the one leaving him, not the other way around.

He did it to Max, the kid who came in to his life years ago before Billy's dad started his bullshit with him. Even then after Neil would cuss up a storm at him, Max would knock at his door and ask him what freshman year at high school was like, or why he was so obsessed with the comic books that he had sprawled on his bed sheets. He remembers reluctantly talking back to her, and showing him the rare comic books that his friend Jimmy gave to him. He thought he was being a smartass and dealing with her back then.

But after Neil starting taking it out on him physically, he would sit in the corner of his room and cry out and curse at the walls. He became angrier when he heard her knock on his door, she was an 8 year old kid who had no right to see him in that pathetic state. So he told her to leave him the fuck alone, and pushed her out his door so hard once, she fell on the floor. Billy could hear her sobbing next door in her room the entire night. He was going to apologize the next morning, but he never did. That was the last time they really ever

talked normally.

“Steve- I-“

Before he could say anything, he finds Steve straddled over his lap.

Steve is sitting over his hips and looking down at him with a slight hesitation, like he's not sure what he's doing. But all Billy wants to do is to reach up and grab his head forward and kiss him senseless. So he does.

He pushes Steve down on to the bed, and the other boy is giggling, and Billy himself can't help but smile back. He was a feeling a little too delighted that Steve still wanted *him*.

It was such a familiar feeling, yet it felt like nothing he's ever done before. Maybe it was the routine they had going on that made their bodies so attuned to each other, but now going in and out of Steve felt like every touch and stroke on his body was a sacred one. Like all he wanted to do was to be gentle, yet intense enough to make him moan out his name over and over again.

They weren't even kissing, barely fucking, just breathing in to each others mouth as Billy went in and out slowly.

He's looking at Steve staring up at him, so delicately. Like all he needed was to look in to the other boys eyes, and he would be broken from this shitty trance that was his entire life.

Here he was this whole time, thinking about Billy, wanting Billy, and caring for Billy. All this time he was aching for Billy the same way Billy was aching for him. It took him just about forever to realize that.

“What are you thinking about?” Steve says through his breathy little moans.

“How I wanna tap this ass everyday..”

“Shut up.” he whacks Billy on his shoulder. "You sure you're not going to get bored of me?"

"I'm serious, Harrington." He places a gentle kiss on Steve's forehead.